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Iowans Urged to Take Five, Talk with Kids to Prevent Drug Abuse

DES MOINES – Saturday, March 5th, is *Take Five* Iowa Day, a day for Iowans to talk with children about the benefits of being drug-free.

In observance of *Take Five* Iowa Day, the Partnership for a Drug-Free Iowa/Face It Together is joining with the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy in calling on parents to set aside a few minutes to talk with their young sons and daughters about making healthy choices to prevent drug abuse.

"It's especially timely now for parents to talk with children about drugs, in light of recent reports showing a rise in teenage substance abuse, particularly marijuana use, nationally," said Peter Komendowski, President of the Partnership for a Drug-Free Iowa/Face It Together. "Research shows that asking questions, setting boundaries and monitoring friends can reduce the odds of teenagers using harmful drugs."

Studies by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America repeatedly show that teenagers who learn about the risks of drugs through ongoing dialog with parents at home are up to 50 percent less likely to ever use drugs.

"The recent increase in teen substance abuse nationally follows several years of declining drug use and coincides with a few states legalizing marijuana smoking, purportedly for medical purposes, and a corresponding softening of anti-drug attitudes," said Mark Schouten, Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy. "It's not OK for teenagers to use marijuana to get high, and it's more important than ever for parents to share this message with their children."

"*Take Five* is a reminder that anytime is a good time to talk with children about drugs," said Komendowski. "We urge Iowa parents to take advantage of easy-to-use age-appropriate tips in *Take Five* school flyers and at www.FaceItTogether.com for help in what to say and how to say it."

As part of the Partnership's *Take Five* program, tip sheets for parents were sent home to parents of Iowa 5th graders. Additionally, free parent pocket guides are available at Casey's General Stores. The 2011 *Take Five* program is sponsored by Iowa Health System.

For more information about the Partnership for a Drug-Free Iowa/Face It Together, or to download a copy of its *Take Five* tips for parents, go to www.FaceItTogether.com.